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ABSTRACT

Mediation or conflict resolution training has been effective in a variety of settings. Using the components of the process (active listening, cooperation, acceptance of differences, creative problem solving, and empathetic responses) students learn to deal with anger and to work with others so as to arrive at solutions peacefully. Some of the standard procedures for mediation training and for creating change can help students recognize their emotions so they can change their behavior. These procedures include analyzing direct physical and psychological effects of hate, using logic to examine competition; improving communication skills; and learning mediation techniques, positive affirmation, and metacognition analysis. A possible project based on the slogan "Don't Hate, Communicate!" is described, with themes and a number of activities suggested. Topics to be covered are listed, as well as suggestions for creating a relaxed, friendly, accepting atmosphere. Additional citations are included in the appendix. (Contains 12 references.) (ND)

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ED 401 267

Strategies for Addressing Racism by Communication and Positive Affirmations or Put More Colloquially, "Don't Hate. Communicate!"

by

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Presentation

at the

Association of Teacher Educators

Annual Meeting

St. Louis, Missouri

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(Musical Anticipation.)

"Let There Be Light/Spirits Dancing in the Flesh"

by Carlos Santana and Chester Thompson.

Through the lyrics of this song, Santana asks for light, joy, love, understanding, peace, and that we work together to build a better world from within because its a spiritual world.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this presentation is to provide one alternative, a philosophical stand, and subsequent strategies 1) to change attitudes that exist as students come to educational settings and 2) to provide the foundations for idiosyncratic schemata development of pluralistic understanding through communication and 3) to establish strategies of metacognition rather than reactive behavioristic stimulus-responses.

The conference theme developed here is "recommending strategies for addressing racism from a healing perspective." Diversity, ethnicity, racial relations, pedagogy, strategies, communication are common descriptors of related concepts throughout this presentation.

Ideas and examples presented here represent two populations. Both college students and public school students have profited in observable ways and in the more subtle, intrinsic ways of learning to dissipate strong,

unproductive, negative emotions that interfered with performance by replacing them with pro-active processes of communication and metacognition. Often, students come to university environments from a great variety of prior conditions some of which include: home locations, socio-economic levels, racial and cultural heritages, primary and secondary languages, and life experiences, and other idiosyncrasies. These same variations are found in any public school setting as well. Most students have already developed attitudes of tolerance or intolerance for diversity through assimilation without logic or choice by the time they first arrive in school. The strategies developed throughout this presentation are intended to heighten awareness so that individuals will make conscious, knowledgeable, reflective choices.

The concepts of mediation, communication, and other integrative methods of the positive effects of diffusing aggression, racism, and prejudice in most cases never have been addressed in the twelve or more years of public school education. Yet, when taught and understood at the affective level as well as cognitive levels, these are the very concepts that can free students to embrace variations in individuals and that can cohesively connect each and every student with universal qualities common to all mankind.

If, indeed, students are not taught concepts of mediation, communication, and other integrative methods, how can they be accountable for these concepts? We cannot expect students to embrace diversity and to know how to truly respect the rights and dignity of others when concepts about such learning is not on the teaching agenda and certainly not contained in most school curricula.

Student athletes talk about the adrenaline rush of the heat of a competition. Middle school students in conflict talk about a similar adrenaline rush in moments before a fight. But, now, what used to be the weekly school fight has become potentially deadly as weapons are more commonly discovered on school campuses. In addition, adrenaline appears to be addictive to many students who habitually are in competition or who gain pleasure from the physical sensations of high stress levels. At least, full physical effort, challenging oneself beyond the usual levels of capability, is a positive stimulus that students often want to repeat. The National Education Goals for the year 2000 includes, "Safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools" offering an "environment conducive to learning" (Ascher, 1996, p. 1). Students who are concerned with issues of safety and violence, they have distractions to education. These issues divert energy and resources from instruction, as Ascher further points out;

> People who grow up in poor urban neighborhoods tend to be surrounded by unemployed adults, rundown housing, a physically deteriorated environment, and the constant fear of crime. . . . these youth experience a free-floating anger, accompanied by feelings of frustration and helplessness, making them tinder boxes, ready to ignite at any provocation (1996, p. 1).

The students represented in this passage create an image of fear. There are many of these explosive students in our schools. But, all students do not follow that pattern.

The student population is not all reacting the same way in response to poor physical environments and stressful social climates at home and at school. Some students have not been taught behavioral, emotional, and intellectual concepts of how to deal with issues of conflict and negative

behaviors, but they do well. In the midst of all of the life problems which are known to lead to failure for most students, there is a percentage of students who succeed in spite of all the odds of adverse circumstances and are found to be "resilient." Reed, McMillan, and McBee found that all children they considered resilient students had similar characteristics, some of which include:

> positive use of time and meaningful involvement in school and other activities. . . . self-esteem . . . a sense of connectedness, recognition, and accomplishment. . . . clear, specific (goals). Their goals were realistic, tended to be long term, and showed that they were optimistic about the future. . . .resilient students have a sense of control over their lives and accept personal responsibility for their successes and failures. . . . they believe that teachers, counselors, and principals contribute greatly to their success in school. . . . "Good" teachers have positive expectations, are supportive, and show a personal interest in the students. . . . responses reflect their hopes for the future, as well as their concerns about their present circumstances. (1995, pp. 3-6).

They exhibit healthy characteristics of internal control, positive self-efficacy, optimism, and personal responsibility which are the universal aims for all of our students and are present in most of our life-long learning goals. One activity that seems to be a priority is goal setting, especially long range goals. These resilient students find ways to have positive experiences and personal interactions with whomever adults are available in their environments. By being active in extra-curricular activities, they network with people who have a common bond of interests and who provide support. Calvert reported that the most resilient students are those who "use their teachers and other staff as mentors and role models, and their time at school as a profitable refuge" (1996, p.1). These

students have a sense of social responsibility, participate in helpful activities, and can empathize with others. In seeking ways to encourage this resilient type of responding, many teachers have found that cooperative learning is a natural way to combine all of the inter-personal skills and effective communication techniques of which students may benefit from various learning styles and strategies like resilient student processes.

THE PROCESS OF TEACHING ATTITUDES

In this simple but effective philosophical stand developed through the experiences of actual experiences, there are constraints of situations in the directive, "Don't hate. Communicate!" A multitude of examples abound to sharpen the focus. Mediation or conflict resolution training is one process that has been shown to be very effective in a variety of settings.

Mediation or "conflict resolution is a constructive approach to inter-personal and inter-group conflicts that helps people with opposing positions work together to arrive at mutually acceptable compromise solutions." In this process, all participants feel that they win, at least win to some degree. Components of the process include active listening, cooperation, acceptance of differences, creative problem-solving, and empathetic responses. Students "learn how to deal with anger and how to work with others to arrive at win-win solutions. Schools with mediation programs use students as mediators so they can learn from experience how conflicts can be resolved peacefully" (Inger, 1991, p. 1). The main impetus of the stand, "Don't hate. Communicate!" can be a theme or school slogan for working

out issues through mediation.

Some of the standard procedures for mediation training and for creating change are the methods used to help students recognize their emotions so that they can change. Emotions of hate loose strength as students become engaged authentically and consciously analyze utilizing methods which emerge from the propositions listed below:

1) Students analyze what concomitant effects the strong negative emotion of hating has on them physically and psychologically.

2) Students use logic to test the appropriateness of competition and a win-lose mentality in situations in which competition causes harm.

3) Communication skill development results in students having new tools and methods to use appropriate language for constructive momentum toward understanding with special attention to listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

4) Mediation techniques, the same as taught for use in the court systems, provide a positive process for the student leaders who need a substitute for the adrenaline rush from the weekly fights and who get stimulation by being the leader of a mediation procedure. This new leadership role is enhanced by the teachers as they provide adult role models in a small unit with effective personal dynamics as comprehensive means to change the deeply rooted attitudes toward others.

5) Students learn the potential of positive affirmations to help internalize the change process and to self-reinforce their ways of interacting with any individual.

6) Through metacognitive analyses, students learn how to learn and to make the effort to constantly improve.

Some of the primary principles of the strategies that have been the most successful at the current time are exemplified also by the resilient student mentioned earlier. These principles have been used successfully by diverse

kinds of school populations throughout the country:

> "Three-fourths of San Francisco's public schools have student conflict managers. In New York City, more than 100 schools with about 80,000 students have some kind of program. In Chicago, all students take a dispute resolution course in ninth or tenth grade. In New Mexico, a statewide mediation program involves 30, 000 students. In Ann Arbor, a conflict management curriculum reaches all of the city's students" (Inger, 1991, p. 1).

Having trained a number of student mediators at Truman Middle School, this author personally witnessed the aggressive responses transform from physical reactions to verbal ones. The verbal were workable through adherence to the guidelines of the process of mediation. If students did not comply with procedures, alternative methods were utilized. Once students experienced a successful mediation experience, they were more likely to use the process again. The advantage of mediation is that the communication takes place between peers. Almasi evaluated sociocognitive responses to print and found three conflicts that inhibited growth and knowledge.

> Three types of sociocognitive conflicts emerged from the data: conflicts within self, conflicts with others, and conflicts with text. . . .The cognitive scenario task revealed that students in peer-led groups were able to recognize and resolve episodes of conflict significantly better than students in teacher-led groups. These results suggest that decentralized participation structures produced discussions that were richer and more complex than discussions that were centralized, resulting in internalization of the cognitive processes associated with engaged reading (1995, p. 314).

Mediation helps students sort out their internal issues, problems with others, and occasionally difficulties with comprehending print.

ACTIVITY OF THE PRESENTATION

After a brief anticipatory description, the participants will critically review some of the videotapes of situational examples and follow with small group discussion. Participants then will apply the concepts to the specifics of their situations and brainstorm and extend and adapt these concepts to become more effective, appropriate ways of diffusing harmful, negative emotions such as "hate" and replacing those emotions with positive pro-active processes for those specific situations. Students from public schools and colleges profit from awareness of inter-personal skills and effective communication techniques to diffuse the strong negative emotion of hate. Information has been documented on videotape. Also, students works exemplifying activities that these strategies produced have been collected and are available for participants perusal. Primary principles of strategies that have been most successful at this current time are detailed. After a brief anticipatory description and self reflective activity, the participants will critically review videotapes of situational examples to be followed by small group discussions. These examples include an interactive distance learning classroom discussion, distance learning lecture followed by debate, a student writing or "talking" on the internet in a "new" Spanish to a student in Acapulco, students from a middle school describing the realities of conflict at their school to college education majors, and a successful student-athlete about to graduate talking about goal setting to a high school low skill level English class. The participants will then apply these concepts to specifics in their situations and will brainstorm ideas for further exploration to match their populations and to extend these

concepts. Effective and appropriate ways of diffusing non-acceptance of differences or hate in the participants' situations will replace that disruptive emotion with positive, proactive processes matched to the specific situations.

A positive, pluralistic development is promoted that embraces diversity as a way of helping develop each individual to reach human potential and social consciousness while embracing a limitless range of variations in other individuals. Furthermore, it promotes attitudinal development toward incorporating diversity with dignity in all groups irrespective of age, race, language, ethnic background, linguistic abilities, cultural heritage or any other factors. Through the modern technological advances, the students may actually communicate with students for whom stereotypes only had been formed. As many world wide organizations for peace such as Sister City and UNESCO promote, the more we get to know individuals, the more dialogue and exchange of ideas, the more we will build world unity and peace. As the author of the opening musical lyrics stated, "joy . . . love . . . understanding . . . peace throughout the land . . . better world . . . bridge . . . light . . . the kingdom within . . . spirits dancing in the flesh all over" (Santana, 1974).

THE THEME OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

An additional educational theme of this project is, "Teach, Don't Assume!" as well as "Don't Hate, Communicate." When teachers were asked to teach proactively, to use language skills to discover similarities

and differences, to build consensus, to incorporate mediation and negotiation, classroom climates were seen to change. The concepts of empathetic response, mediation, communication, and the positive effects of diffusing aggression, racism, and prejudice were taught, and understanding was developed for emotional as well as cognitive growth. The student was released to embrace variations in individuals while cohesively connecting with universal qualities that exist in all cultures and are common to all humankind.

In illustrating kinds of activities used for a focus of "Don't Hate, Communicate," some samples of titles of reading and writing activities that built on this theme, used successfully with students from age five to young college adults as samples of strategies and sub-themes are listed as follow:

1. Acknowledge Your Attitudes.
2. Disclose and Discuss.
3. Express Yourself.
4. Analyze Awesomely.
5. Actively Listen.
6. Prepare for Work.
7. Preview the Purpose.
8. Experience the Process.
9. Play All the Roles.
10. Collaborative Learning: Many Voices--Learn as One.
11. Celebrate Differences: Variety with No Limits.
12. Celebrate Sameness: Universal Human Qualities.
13. Mediation: Finding Middle Ground Through Structured Talks.
14. Overtalking a Crisis, Dissipation.
15. Social and Behavioral Skill Development.
16. Conflict Resolution: Challenging the Limits.
17. Humanity Development: Caring and Responsibilities.
18. Controlled Physical Expression through Karate and Jujitsu.
19. Students as Care-Givers.
20. Leadership Training.
21. Roles of Social Necessity.
22. Debate Defensively. A Centering Activity.

23. Confidential Support Groups.
24. Values Clarification. Beauty, Meaning, Quality.
25. Magnificent Marvelous Maker.
26. Out and About: Broadening the Scope of Experience.
27. Sources for Information beyond the Curriculum.
28. Technology for Sharing in the Moment. (Internets)
29. Dramatic Dialogues for Role Playing.
30. Dramatic Production for Video-recording.
31. Transcendence.
32. Metacognate.
33. Dramatic Live Performance.
34. The Secret Treasure of Sharing.
35. Watching the Writing: Notes on Notes.
36. Self-Knowledge of What and Why.
37. Wait, Don't Procrastinate, Just Incubate.
38. Fictionalized Frames for Fantasy.
39. Conferencing With Confidence.
40. Interviewer Initiatives.
41. Interviewee Intrigue.
42. Peeling the Onion or "What's your Story?"
43. Move on.
44. Win/Lose=Lose, Lose, Lose.
45. New Skin.
46. Pure Plurals.
47. Internalized Intent.
48. Situational Selections.
49. Intolerance for Intolerance.
50. Grand Finale or Closure.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESENTATION

After a brief description and after the participants have critically reviewed some of the videotapes of situational examples, followed with small group discussion, they will be asked to list some of the private areas about which they have strong negative emotions on one half of the inside of a piece of paper. They then are asked to list three on the outside of the

paper which they are willing to share with the members of their small group. After reflection and feedback from the group, on the other side of the paper, they will list titles of topics that could be used to dissipate those strong emotions. Any special items or needs, information, or technologic equipment that could be used as augmenting tools will be listed on the other side of the paper. A closure discussion of this activity will help participants become aware of the feelings they have but may not want to share. Participants may choose to share and react if not by sharing their lists then by reacting to the process. The lists of items, information, or technologic equipment will give insights at a deeper, more disclosing level to provide ideas toward actual implementation.

Participants will then have a final opportunity to experience the process and to touch the hidden affective areas possibly restrictive in educational settings. They will brainstorm of some of the topics that could be used to focus on the positive side of this presentation. These topics might be seen as self-affirmations or as complements to the group and may even become self-fulfilling prophecies (see Appendix, Condon, 1975, p.65). Some examples from previous settings include,

making progress
no more bruises
smiling
joy in _____
true to myself
being thanked in an unspoken way
hearing praise
mean the world
trusted
feeling good
kindness abounds
great performance
words, not fists
intelligent
a true friend
honest
honorable
leader
a job well done
responsible
looking good
friends
knowing inside
production of quality

awesome	skillful
respected	place in the world
capable	successful
getting along	controlling destiny
content	kindhearted
skillful	the way I want to be
strong	helpful

As participants are reminded, active, affective, and cognitive learning allows students to be happy with themselves and with others in any given setting. Additional suggestions of topics follow to create a relaxed, friendly, accepting atmosphere through writing and discussing:

Improve
Create Resilient Students
Upward
Diverse Learning Styles
The Greatest Asset
For Others
Now, Not Later
Today, Not Tomorrow
Positive Support Systems
Exercise
Refresh
Having Fun
Humor
Prioritized
Involved With What Matters
Simplify
Letting Go of Things that Don't Matter
Managing Time
Rewarding Yourself
Value Yourself
Go to Help
Getting help
Doing the Things You Like
Collaborate
Consensus Building with Red Flags Flying
Facing the Red Flags
Time for Your Choices
Quality Literature with All the Elements of Life

Good and Bad _____
Positive Use of Time
Industrious
Survival
Significant People
High Expectations of _____
Encouragement
Climate

As Turner points out, "Studies of motivation for literacy should focus on how literacy contexts, including tasks, influence children's actions and understandings (1995, p. 411). Motivations are often from the affective perspective. Englert and Palincsar have listed three assumptions of affective qualities from a sociocultural perspective: "literacy knowledge is a cultural phenomenon, cognitive processes related to literacy are acquired in holistic, contextualized activity, and literacy processes originate in social interactions with others (1991 p. 225). We must teach our students to communicate and to solve problems before they become internalized into hate. After questions and answers, as the session is over, the following song will be played

"Peace on Earth Mother Earth . . . Third Stone From the Sun"
by John Coltrane, Carlos Santana, and Jim Hendrix (1974).

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APPENDIX OF ADDITIONAL CITATIONS

On accepting differences:

The key to community is the acceptance--in fact, the celebration--of our individual and cultural differences. Such acceptance and celebration--which resolves the problem of pluralism and which can occur only after we learn how to become empty--is the key to world peace. This does not mean, however, that as we struggle toward world community we need to consider all individuals or all cultures and societies equally good or mature. . . . The reality is that just as some individuals have become much more mature than others, some cultures are more or less flawed than others (Peck, 1987, p. 186).

On effective communication:

Communication takes many forms: written and oral or verbal and nonverbal. Similarly, there are many standards by which we can judge the effectiveness of communication. . . . There is one standard, however, that takes precedence over all others: does communication lead to greater or lesser understanding among human beings? If communication improves the quality of the relationship between two or more people, we must judge it from an overall standpoint to be effective. On the other hand, if it creates confusion, misunderstanding, distortions, suspicion, or antipathy in human relations, we must conclude it to be ineffective--even in those instances in which the communicator is evil, deliberately desires to sow seeds of mistrust and hostility, and may achieve that end. The overall purpose of human communication is--or should be--reconciliation. . . . Confrontive, even angry communication is sometimes necessary to bring into focus the clear reality of those barriers before they can be knocked down . . . individual differences must first be allowed to surface and be fought

over so that the group can ultimately learn to accept, celebrate, and thereby transcend them (Peck, 1987, p. 257).

On self-fulfilling prophecy:
Saying it may make it so. It is clear that when one tries to live up to a label he has given himself, he limits his activities to those the label has prescribed. It is possible, however, for persons to change the character of behavior of other persons and institutions by labeling them and then by acting on the label. . . . This common language habit has been called "the self-fulfilling prophecy" by sociologist Robert K. Merton. When we predict that something of which we are a part will happen, our prediction may be instrumental in causing that something to happen. Not only statements directly involving the speaker but also statements which indirectly involve the speaker may take the form of the self-fulfilling prophecy. (Condon, 1975, p. 65).
Note that the self-fulfilling prophecy works only when the area about which the prediction is made may, in some way, be acted upon. It does not apply to statements like "It must not rain tomorrow" or any other descriptions or predictions that are not socially based.

Blame it on the language. "Black is beautiful," proclaimed the slogan . . . the slogan also attempted to counteract a pattern in American English language habits in which "black" is consistently used with negative associations (Condon, 1975, p. 66).

Affective communication:
Communication in which the message is the emotional feelings of the speaker toward a listener is known as affective communication. Compliments, praise and flattery, and also snide and cutting remarks.

The nonaffective language of fact and description or the language of clear and explicit requests need not be any more desirable than it is common in interpersonal communications.

Affective language is convincing language. In many cases a person would not do something if asked to do it directly; he would be too aware of reasons that he might not be able to

accept. We seem to prefer to do things we think we want to do, not things we are told to do (Condon, 1975, pp. 102-103).

The purpose of communication:
To be aware of the many functions of communication is to be alive and sensitive to the most basic of human needs. As our needs for bodily health and comfort are met, we become more aware of (and create new) needs for symbolic health and comfort. To be loved or respected, to help others, to feel trust--the list could be elaborated greatly--becomes extremely important. Each communication situation both reveals our frailty and offers some promise for support (Condon, 1975, p. 115).

Personal needs:
We all have needs. There are our physical needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, that keep us alive and warm. We also have emotional needs. Here is a small sample of common emotional needs:

To be loved	To feel safe
To feel appreciated	To have time to be alone
To feel capable	To have privacy
To be understood	To have time with friends
To be respected	To have fun

If these emotional needs aren't met, we get depressed, irritable, anxious, lonely. Kids are no different. But children in homes where there's chemical dependence not only don't get their emotional needs met; they don't even know they have such needs (Fleming, 1990, p. 102).

Children's art reflects emotions:
These poignant drawings reveal the true depth or these children's feelings, and tell how much children are in touch with the main issues and how they try to handle and integrate their experiences. Children's art, as well as original stories, fantasies, dreams and play, can be therapeutic tools for helping children, and an excellent medium for discovering the inner world of the child.

The message of these drawings is very clear. These children and untold numbers like them are involved in intolerable

situations which can only lead to frustration and unhappiness from generation to generation. Many children are in a no-win situation that keeps them in a state of torment throughout their entire childhood. To make matters worse, the quality of their lives does not improve in adulthood, either because of the many unhappy memories and experiences that they carry with them from their childhood. The positive side of all of this is that parents can learn to get along after divorce and that children are very resilient and can heal rather quickly if they are given half a chance.
(Bienenfeld, 1987, p.154).

Motivation to become literate:
There has been spirited debate as well as significant research about which kinds of literacy tasks are most effective in fostering children's literacy development . . . much less attention has been devoted to the motivational effects of literacy tasks and instruction . . . effort, persistence, and concentration (Turner, 1995, p. 410).

Teachers' role:
it is the teachers' responsiveness and transactions with students within their zones of proximal development that guide literacy development. . . . instruction interventions cannot be entirely controlled, but must be "customized" through dialogic interactions based upon students' knowledge, abilities, and responses. . . moment to moment adjustments represent critical vantage points from which new understandings of instruction can emerge (Englert & Palincsar, 1991 p. 228).